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F 6038

27 AUG 1942

1942

CHINA

Registry Number } F 6038/1193/10

FROM Sir H. Seymour,
(Chungking).

No. 277.

Dated 11th August, 1942

Received in Registry } 27th Aug. 1942

F: China.

Conditions in Hong Kong and Macao.

Transmits extracts from a report made on conditions at Macao by Mr. A. Botelho, who left Hong Kong for Free China on 5th June. Also transmits copy of report on conditions in Hong Kong written by Mr. and Mrs. A.J. Eger, who recently left Hong Kong for Macao and Free China and who have now proceeded to India.

Requests reports be copied to Colonial Office.

Last Paper.

76032

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

8 CO. (Lolol Cole)
WO. (D.P. M - Gen Jpp)
Sally
Abu. Sept 4
WO.
8. (extract from
the bank's report)
12y. Sept 4

(Action completed.)

14/9/42

(Index.)

14/9/42

Next Paper.

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(Minutes.)

Dis. Business (Gen Jpp),
copies to CO (Lolol Cole) & service
depts, & (8 "Financial" in Mr Eardley's
report) to Treasury.

11/8/42 3/9

P.O. W. Dept. 11/8/42
Commler Dept. (re Mr. Reeves).

11/8/42 3/12

Mr. Evans: 11/8/42 3/9

1) W.O. (Misc) letter of 24 Aug.
Copy entered K. 10316/17/236.

11/8/42 3/9.

Miss Evans (Tey) has asked
whether she may communicate to
the Commercial Banks in London the
last section (Financial) of the Report
received through Mr Eardley.
Would there be any objection?

27446 2/42 F.O.P.

L. Evans

11/8/42 3/9.

→

I see no objection, so long as
she does not disclose the channel
through which it comes, nor
mention the names of Sir H.
Seymour, or Mr Eardley, or
Mr Botelho, or Mr & Mrs
Eger.

S.S.

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^(continued)
Miss Evans so informed.

Thos
11/9.

No. 277

F 30
208
BRITISH EMBASSY,
CHUNGKING,

August 11th, 1942.

F 6038

27 AUG 1942

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit herewith extracts from a report made on conditions at Macao by a Mr. A. Botelho who left Hongkong for Free China on 5th June, 1942. The rest of the report is of purely military interest and has been dealt with by my Military Attache.

2. I also enclose a copy of a report on conditions in Hongkong written by Mr and Mrs A.J. Eger who recently left Hongkong for Macao and Free China and who have now proceeded to India. Mr. Eger is a Swiss who was temporarily employed in the Stores Department of the Government of Hongkong.

3. I should be grateful if copies of these reports might be passed to the Colonial Office.

I have the honour to be,
With the highest respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

H. L. L. L.

The Right Honourable
Anthony Eden, M.C., M.P.,
Foreign Office,
London, S.W.1.

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REPORT of HONG KONG by MR. and MRS. A. J. EGER

1. The International Red Cross. Some time ago local circles in HONG KONG wanted to organize and form an International Red Cross Service, but this was rejected by the JAPANESE AUTHORITIES, because they had no connection with GENEVA. Now a SWISS who had been a business man in JAPAN and was much respected by the Swiss community in HONG KONG has been chosen as a representative of the International Red Cross. The man selected is a MR. EGLI who speaks fluent Japanese. He must have arrived in HONG KONG about the time MR. and MRS. EGER left, namely, June 4th. His duty will be to inspect and go through all the camps and make a report of the conditions therein. MR. EGLI is highly esteemed by the Swiss community, but doubt existed as to whether MR. EGLI will have sufficient moral courage to withstand Japanese blandishments and whether his backbone will stand the strain that is likely to be imposed upon.
2. MR. EGER says that there were not more than three warships in the harbour on an average for some time before he left. There were two medium sized warships (possibly light cruisers) of late, but not more than one or two Japanese transports were ever to be seen in the harbour. From where he was on MT. CAMERON looking towards REPULSE BAY there appeared to be two searchlights, one to the right and one to the left in that general direction. Since about the middle of April these searchlights have not been seen by EGER. From his position he is not prepared to say whether these two searchlights were located on the island or the mainland. These lights when in use were thrown on the PEAK area, apparently covering the houses there.
3. He heard nothing at any time of any Prisoners of War being transferred from NORTH POINT to other camps, the Japanese being very secretive. Towards the end of April he heard that four prisoners had attempted to escape from SHAMSHUIPO but were captured and brought back. He did not hear what happened to these men. Three Swedes who were appointed by the Japanese to guard the Japanese Governor's Lodge which was a white house located between the PEAK TRAM STATION and MAGAZINE GAP, were shot by looters of unknown identity about the end of April. Up to the time of his departure he did not hear of these murderers being caught by the Japanese authorities. THE GOVERNOR was represented at the funeral of these guards by an aide-de-camp.
4. MRS. EGER states that numbers of volunteers stated to have been missing since the surrender have been heard of as operating as a group somewhere in the NEW TERRITORIES. MRS. EGER made this statement with all due reserve, stating that she has no confirmation.
5. Every fortnight the JAPANESE held artillery practice, notified^{to} the public in the local Japanese newspaper. About the same time machine gun fire could be heard. MR. EGER expressed the opinion that the volume of gun fire heard by him on these occasions was, what he termed, very small. Almost daily shots could be heard which were caused by fire arms being used on looters.
6. Freedom of Movement. We were allowed to move about freely up to 11 p.m. All were required to produce a passport when necessary to the Japanese sentry. Whenever the JAPANESE GOVERNOR was moving from place to place martial law was instituted and people had to remain where they were, sometimes for a couple of hours. Of late MR. and MRS. EGER stated that they had a very definite impression

that the Japanese were firmly endeavouring to push out all Third Nationals from the COLONY. This dates back to the end of March when all Consulates in the COLONY were abolished by the JAPANESE.

MR. EGER states that all Third Nationals felt that they were entirely without protection or representation. At the time of the abolition of the Consulates old passes were called in and new passes issued which were valid until September. A rumour was rife prior to our departure on June 4th that forced evacuation of the destitute and poorer classes of the Chinese population had taken place. It is reported that two or three vessels carrying these people were sunk. The cause of such sinking was unknown at the time of MR. and MRS. EGER's departure. At about the same time all able-bodied Chinese found in the streets were forced to contribute blood for transfusion, (presumably for Japanese wounded soldiers).

7. WANCHAI area. About one hundred houses in WANCHAI were cleared of their occupants without notice, these houses being taken over to accommodate the Japanese wounded soldiers, who were said to have come from FORMOSA. MR. EGER also heard a rumour that these houses were required for the accommodation of Japanese women and children evacuees from CANTON.
8. Medical Service. MR. and MRS. EGER expressed the opinion that the Japanese medical and sanitary services might be considered fairly good as far as they went. But the practice which had been prevalent for some time past of shooting looters on the spot and leaving the corpse lying in the open for as long as five days is to be deplored. For example, one of these looters was shot and his body left at the middle of the crossroad near WANCHAI GAP for five days, the resultant odour, flies, etc. can be better imagined than described, according to MR. and MRS. EGER. The reason for this particular policy appears to be that of terrorising and/or providing an object lesson for would be looters. *and find*
- + 9. MR. EGER states that apparently there is no restriction on listening to short-wave wireless stations, as far as he was aware.
10. Firearms. From the middle of April onwards the Japanese conducted an intensive house to house search for fire-arms, closely questioning all inmates. MR. EGER gained the impression that the Japanese were really concerned regarding the possibility of possession of firearms by people other than the Japanese themselves.
11. MR. and MRS. EGER states that the Japanese were most ridiculous in searching passengers between HONG KONG and KOWLOON, even the smallest package was subject to search and the closest scrutiny. This also applies to passengers travelling by bus to places such as ABERDEEN, the Chinese being subjected to personal search. This, however, did not apply to Third Nationals. As far as Third Nationals were concerned we knew nothing of the whereabouts of the GOVERNOR OF HONG KONG and/or his staff except that we heard at the beginning that he was located at the Peninsula Hotel. We Third Nationals gained the decided impression that even Japanese private soldiers, sentries, etc., looked upon us with the gravest suspicion.
12. MR. EGER states that very noticeable rivalry exists in the COLONY between the JAPANESE NAVAL, MILITARY and GENDARME SERVICES. MR. EGER gathered the impression that while the NAVAL PARTY apparently consider themselves superior to the MILITARY PARTY, the GENDARMES certainly appear to outrank the other two. The

The Japanese civil population, consisting of businessmen, private citizens, etc., do not fare well at the hand of any of the three mentioned services. The authorities do not encourage private business men to trade with Third Nationals and Chinese; attempts to expand business being frowned upon by the services mentioned. Wholesale dealing is practically non-existent and all business is subject to strict control by permit, license, etc, etc. which, however, are generally granted on a rather small scale. A businessman who happens to conduct a transaction with a Third National or Chinese business friend without the very necessary Japanese documentary authority is severely reprimanded, while the Third National is likely to suffer imprisonment and the more dreaded ordeal of a Japanese verbal cross-examination.

13. About a month subsequent to the surrender of the COLONY a number of high ranking German officers visited the COLONY and conducted an inspection and presumably an investigation. Photographs of these men together with Japanese officers were published in the local papers at that time.
14. Prisoner of War Camps. MR. and MRS. EGER state that prior to the escapes from these camps it was often possible to approach the barbed wire fence and pass parcels across to friends amongst the Prisoners of War, even notes might have been exchanged in this way. Subsequent to the escapes, however, regulations were tightened and intensified to such an extent that nothing of the kind is now possible. On the application being made to the Japanese to visit Prisoners of War they are told that after about a fortnight it might be possible. On the expiration of this period, and on further application they are again told that it might still be a fortnight and so on. As from May 1st MRS. EGER states that one could send parcels to STANLEY consisting of five tins of food products to friends interned there. This could be done through the section of the Foreign Office with the offices in the Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank Building on Tuesdays and Fridays. Up to the time of their departure on June 4th this privilege appeared to be still in operation.
15. Market Prices. It is interesting to note as pointed out by MRS. EGER that prices of tinned meat in particular, coffee and tinned food stuffs in general had decreased. Prices at the time of her departure were, for example, a lb. tin of corned beef could be purchased at HK\$1.60, a tin of Del Monte coffee could be obtained at HK\$6.30. This in contrast to earlier conditions when this same coffee cost \$18. Mrs. EGER states that fresh meat could only be obtained at high prices, pork being HK\$6 per catty. In the market and in one or two small shops HK Dollars were being accepted. All the larger establishments and all restaurants and cafes etc., called for the Japanese Military Yen.
16. All sign-boards throughout the COLONY have been changed into Japanese or Chinese characters; European signs are forbidden. All street and road names are now changed to Japanese names.
17. Since the 1st May the JAPANESE have organized race meetings. The Peak Tram had been repaired and put into operation as from June 1st. On the Peak area almost every house is deserted and has been most thoroughly looted of its contents, in many cases even floor boards, window frames, etc., were removed. Water taps were left on in many cases and water was simply running to waste. MR. and MRS. EGER stated that one has a most eerie feeling when looking around at the ghostly atmosphere of the once populous Peak area. Not even Japanese are to be seen, except for one Gendarme station which is right on the top of the Peak.

18. A small number of Indians were to be seen undergoing training as policemen by the JAPANESE. These were to be used as patrol parties. Japanese soldiers could be seen every morning undergoing bayonet exercises etc., on the Murray Parade Ground opposite the Cricket Club. Both MR. and MRS. EGGER state that their impression is that so far as the ISLAND is concerned they would say that the number of Japanese troops stationed there is very small. With respect to the Mainland they expressed the opinion that possibly greater numbers are stationed there, but in proportion to the size of the area.
19. Motor Vehicles. Subsequent to the surrender MR. EGGER states that the Race Course, Cricket Club and the adjoining football ground were covered with motor cars collected by the Japanese. Those vehicles which were not serviceable were reduced to small dimensions by hydraulic presses (presumably for shipment abroad), and at the end of two months the collection of vehicles in the places mentioned had completely disappeared. As from about the 1st April Third Nationals were able to obtain licenses for motor cars and bicycles owned by them. It is to be noted that these licenses were difficult to obtain and there was a considerable time lag between the application and the granting thereof.
20. EGGER confirms that the American nationals were notified by the Japanese to prepared to leave on June 16th for Lourenco Marques - this obviously refers to the reported exchange of prisoners.

Chungking, 3rd August, 1942.

Far Eastern Dept.
Foreign Office

Encl

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With the

compliments of M.I.2(c).

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Please see and (keep.

~~return.~~

(Report on British
Consul, Macao,
entered K

M.I.2(c).

31 / 8 / 42.

Ext. 235

F 621

K. J. Lane

Capt S
Major, G.S.

3 SEP 1942